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ABSTRACT

The prototypal course in newspaper management described in this paper is based on systems analysis and the systems flow approach. The introductory section of the paper discusses the need for instruction in newspaper management, the concepts of the systems approach and systems flow and the way they relate to enterprise management, and specific objectives for a newspaper management course. Other sections suggest a schedule for group discussions about many aspects of newspaper management (which provide the basic framework of the course), and comment on other course components, including course readings, seminars in which resource persons participate, student inspection of newspaper publishing facilities, student in-depth research on selected problems, and quizzes and examinations. The appendixes provide a bibliography of publications dealing with newspaper management; lists of relevant periodicals and organizations; suggested topics for resource persons' presentations; instructions for student research projects; representative questions for discussion sessions, quizzes, and examinations; and representative responses to an essay question in a newspaper management course examination. (GT)

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PROTOTYPAL COURSE IN NEWSPAPER MANAGEMENT

A Systems Analysis Approach to Teaching the Economic Context of Press Freedom in Modern Society

by John De Mott

Department of Journalism

Temple University

A Position Paper for Teaching Session

on Newspaper Management

Sponsored by Newspaper Division

Association for Education in Journalism

1976 Convention

University of Maryland

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"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CS204796

Today's most exciting challenge in social responsibility, for professors of journalism throughout the United States, is the teaching of Newspaper Management and the economics of newspaper publishing.

At schools and departments of journalism around the country, attempts are being made to modernize and improve existing courses.(1)

On the national and regional level, ANPA and numerous other organizations are urging schools and departments of journalism to give more attention--perceptive and discriminating attention--to the challenge of successful newspaper publishing in today's economy.(2)

If social need and relevance are appropriate considerations--in structuring journalism school curricula and programs--the current concern over courses in Newspaper Management is both timely and in the public interest.

Newspapers have been through a difficult ordeal these past few years, with the rest of our economy. And if we really believe that the newspaper plays a vital role in making democracy work, then the financial condition and problems of newspapers are of logical concern of any citizen--journalist, journalism professor, journalism student, or otherwise.

Since they have the best available understanding of newspaper management, in the academic community, schools and departments of journalism should be offering courses in the economics of newspaper publishing to the general public--the readers of newspapers as well as those for whom newspapers provide employment.

Before such a public service can be performed adequately, however, education for journalism needs to drastically expand its capabilities for competent teaching of newspaper management courses, and further accelerate the rapid improvement of such courses underway at this time.(3)

Instruction in Newspaper Management, although neglected too often in schools and departments of journalism, is not a novel thing.

On the contrary, a special sequence in newspaper publishing exists at the University of Missouri, the nation's oldest school of journalism.(4) Numerous other schools and departments of journalism offer individual courses in newspaper management, and sometimes more than one.

Sophisticated computer techniques designed to simulate "the newspaper game" have been developed for teaching newspaper management at Texas university,(5) and other schools are building capability.

With materials like John Udell's new book and long-needed bibliographic resources(6) becoming available now, the rate of improvement should compound itself rapidly.

As the assembling of data and construction of information banks continues, more emphasis needs to be given the organization of courses in Newspaper Management, to achieve the most effective method of instruction or learning.

One of the most promising approaches to continuing and accelerated development of courses in newspaper management is that of systems analysis and systems flow.(7)

The concepts of the systems approach were developed from answers to some questions familiar to every news person: why, where, with what, whom, how and when.

The five concepts of the systems approach are:

Purposes--why

Environment--where

Resources and obligations--with what

Organization--who

Decisions--how and when

The three concepts of systems flow, on the other hand, are:

Input

Process

Output

The systems analysis and systems flow approach enables us to relate newspaper publishing to other forms of enterprise--private or public--and to make comparisons between enterprises that illustrate best the basic principles and functions of management. Those functions, common to all kinds of enterprise management, are:

1. Decision making--the process by which a course of action is consciously chosen from available alternatives for the purpose of achieving a desired result.

2. Organizing--the process by which the structure and allocation of jobs is determined.

3. Staffing--the process by which managers select, train, promote and retire subordinates.

4. Planning--the process by which a manager anticipates the future and discovers alternative courses of action open to him.

5. Controlling--the process that measures current performance and guides it toward some predetermined goal.

6. Communicating--the process by which ideas are transmitted to others for the purpose of effecting a desired result.

7. Directing--the process by which actual performance of subordinates is guided toward common goals.

"All these functions are closely interrelated," Joseph Massie explains(8), "however, it is useful to treat each as a separate process for the purpose of spelling out the detailed concepts important to the whole job of the manager. At times it may be desirable to consider several functions jointly in order to show their close interrelationships. For example, communicating and controlling must be considered together in systems planning; organizing, communicating and staffing may be viewed together in studying organization behavior.

"A list of management functions is merely a useful analytical device," Massie adds, "for stressing the basic elements inherent in the job of management. At times it might be desirable to identify subfunctions for purpose of emphasis."

Using standard texts on principles of management that have been borrowed from management science, and adapting them to the newspaper, we can best achieve the basic objective that appears to have been most commonly adopted for courses in newspaper management. Courses to give news reporters and/or other prospective employees of newspapers the best possible knowledge of general administration and overall management, explaining the context in which any and every individual job is done.

Specific objectives of the course include these:

1. Familiarity with the functions of the executive--the newspaper publisher, in this case--and theories of organization and principles of good management.

2. Knowledge of how a newspaper enterprise is managed, as a complex organization, and the operations of all departments--general administration, personnel, news-editorial, advertising, production, circulation, promotion, public relations, research, etc.

3. Better understanding of the United States economy, and economic conditions needed for the more perceptive reporting and editing of news concerning business, commerce, industry and finance.

Recommended method of instruction

Using systems analysis and flow as basic approaches(9), the method employs a combination of group discussions, readings, conferences, resource persons with in-the-field inspections of newspaper publishing facilities, and in-depth investigation of some selected problem in newspaper management.

Group discussions, providing the basic framework of the course, follow this schedule:

First week--general overview of private enterprise, business, industry and public administration. Their common problems, as adventures in human enterprise. Use of systems analysis in studying such enterprises, and in identifying and solving problems. Current problems in newspaper publication and management.

Second week--Economic and social context of newspaper publication. Its political environment and legal framework. Laws governing newspaper publication and management practices. (Anti-trust laws, postal regulations, the national labor relations board, etc.)

Third week--Introduction to the science of organizational behavior. Basic principles of management and organization. Theories of bureaucracy. Functions of the executive. Executive "styles."

Fourth week--Existing patterns of newspaper organization. Options for management. The "Total Newspaper" concept. General administration. Responsibilities of the publisher. Line and staff functions: functional organization. Departmentalization.

(OUTPUT)

Fifth week--News: the basic commodity. Organization of the editorial department and its supervision. End product as reflection of sound management.

Sixth week--Advertising: local and national: display and classified.

Seventh week--Demand for the newspaper. Marketing considerations. The promotion of circulation. Circulation department organization and operation. Delivery systems.

Eighth week--Overall promotion of the newspaper. Public relations. Public or community services.

(PROCESS)

Ninth week--Production. Principles of industrial engineering and their relevance to newspaper technology.

Tenth week--Organization of the mechanical department(s). Composing and pressroom efficiency. New developments anticipated.

Eleventh week--Office management. Research and development.

(INPUT)

Twelfth week--Finances. The acquisition of capital. Patterns of ownership: advantages and disadvantages. Public sale of stock. Financing plant improvement and/or expansion. Maintenance of equipment. Purchase of material and supplies. Newsprint availability, etc.

Thirteenth week--Recruitment of employees. Orientation and training. Personnel administration. Labor relations. Union contracts, etc.

Fourteenth week--Information systems. Computers and their use. Cost accounting. Financial reporting. The Inland studies, etc.

Fifteenth week--Efforts to anticipate the future. The futurists and their predictions. Projection of current trends, etc.

Readings

Following the preceding schedule, assignments are given in appropriate books, professional journals and other sources of information.

Books most often used in Newspaper management courses are listed in Appendix A of this report.

Periodicals used most often are in Appendix B.

Resource persons

Conferences should be held frequently with publishers of newspapers, other newspaper executives and appropriate representatives of area, state, regional, national or international organizations involved in newspaper management.

Organizations from which such resource persons can be obtained are listed in the Editor & Publisher yearbook, from which executives of individual newspapers (publishers, executive editors, advertising directors, circulation managers, etc.) can be obtained.

Suggested questions for executives invited to participate in such seminar sessions are given in Appendix D.

Inviting such executives to participate in seminar sessions--or projects like publisher-in-residence arrangements--helps journalism faculty keep up with current developments, as well as giving students an acquaintance with leaders in the field (prospective employees, perhaps).

It's good public relations, as well as education.

Inspection of Newspaper Publishing Facilities

At some point in the semester or quarter, students should make an in-the-field study of at least one modern newspaper production system.

Following the study, a detailed report describing that system, and comparing it to older systems in the area, should be written.

The plant tour should include a talk with appropriate production personnel.

Ideally, more than one tour can be made.

Research on Selected Problem

In-depth investigation of some selected problem in newspaper management, including the preparation of a comprehensive report to be submitted to the most appropriate newspaper executive for review and critique.

Suggested instructions are in Appendix E.

Quizzes, Examinations, etc.

To obtain frequent feedback, concerning the understanding that students are acquiring, frequent quizzes and examinations need to be given.

Representative questions for both are given in Appendix F.

In Appendix G, a representative examination question and answer are given.

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NOTES

1. See Eberhard, Wallace. "Publication Management: Journalism's Stepchild?," a paper submitted to the Newspaper division, Association for Education in Journalism, Ottawa, Canada, May 12, 1975, and Polich, John "Management Education in Journalism," a paper presented to a Media Management and Political Economy session, AEJ, 1975.

2. See most recent report of American Newspaper Publishers association foundation.

3. "Information Needed about Courses in Newspaper Management," AEJ newspaper division newsletter No. 2 (February, 1976).

4. Bray, William. Letter to author, April 16, 1976. MU's Newspaper publishing sequence is fully accredited by ACEJ. Several other schools have sequences now.

5. See Harper, Joseph, and A. Richard Elam, "Use of a Computer Simulation Model in Teaching a Newspaper Management Course," a paper presented at 1976 convention Association for Education in Journalism, at Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada.

6. An extensive newspaper management bibliography, compiled from sources including the ERIC information system, is being prepared by Wallace Eberhard of the University of Georgia.

7. The basic framework for such a systems analysis approach to enterprise study is provided by Kircher, Paul, and Richard Mason, Introduction to Enterprise: a Systems Approach. (Los Angeles: Melville Publishing Co., 1975)

8. Essentials of Management, (Englewood Cliffs, NY: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971), pp. 6-7.

9. Other common and popular approaches include those based on the typical newspaper's organizational pattern (departments for news, production, circulation, advertising, promotion, research, etc.) and current problems/or issues (the pros and cons of mergers, the impact of strikes, newspaper credibility versus broadcasting, local press council movements, etc.)

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Appendix A

NEWSPAPER MANAGEMENT BIBLIOGRAPHY

(General)

Accounting Manual For Daily Newspapers (Inland Daily Press association, 1969)--outlines the Inland cost studies.

American Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation, Learning in the Newsroom: a Manual for Supervisors.

Argyris, Chris, Behind the Front Page--organizational behavior of a newspaper: a case study.

Arnold, Edmund, Modern Newspaper Design

Arnold, Edmund, Profitable Newspaper Advertising

Associated Press Managing Editors Association, APME Guidelines.

Associated Press, The APME Red Book--published annually.

Bernhart, Thomas F., Weekly Newspaper Management.

Bennett, Charles O., Facts Without Opinion--the Audit Bureau of Circulations: a history.

Bureau of Advertising, The Newspaper as an Advertising Medium.

Circulation Accounting Methods and Procedures, Institute of Newspaper Controllers and Finance Officers.

Classified Advertising Accounting Procedures, INCFO.

Data Processing Equipment and Applications, INCFO.

Edwards, Kenneth, Promotion and Planning for Newspaper Profit--a manual for newspaper management.

Facts About Newspapers, an annual mini-summary of the daily newspaper business, by ANPA.

Ferguson, James, The Advertising Rate Structure in the Daily Newspaper.

Hirt, Paul, Newspaper Presentation.

Hirt, Paul, Designing Retail Ads for Profit.

Hynds, Ernest, American Newspaper's in the 1970s.

Internal Control and Audit for Newspapers, INCFO.

Kennedy, Bruce, Community Journalism.

Lyle, Jack, The News in Megalopolis.

Mauro, John B., Ed., Newspaper Research Primer.

McClure, Leslie, Newspaper Advertising and Promotion.

McDonald, Morton, Ed., Principles and Practices of Classified Advertising--dated, but helpful because of time perspective.

McGrew, James, Guide to More Successful Real Estate Advertising--INPA publication.

Meyer, Newell, Let's Talk About Managing People--International Newspaper Promotion Association publication.

Meyer, Newell, Creative Imagination--INPA publication.

Newspaper and Newsprint Facts at a Glance--issued annually by Newsprint Information Committee.

Newspaper Credit and Collection Management, INCFO.

A Newspaper Publisher--No. 2 in "Case Studies in Auditing Procedure," by American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

Newsprint Accounting and Control, INCFO.

Pollard, James, Principles of Newspaper Management.
Problems of Journalism--published annually by the American Society of Newspaper Editors.
Profit Planning for Newspapers, INCFO.
Property Control for Newspapers, INCFO.
Reporting to Newspaper Management, INCFO.
Reynolds, Irvine, Economics and the Free Press in America (Copley Newspapers, 1964)--dated, but still helpful for its perspective.
Rucker, Frank W., Newspaper Circulation...What...Where and How.
Rucker, Frank W., and Herbert Lee Williams, Newspaper Organization and Management.
Rucker, Frank W., and B. Stolpe, Tested Newspaper Promotion.
Shaw, Clifford A., Ed., Newspaper Promotion--an Introductory work.
Shover, William, Ed., Promoting the Total Newspaper.
Standard Chart of Accounts for Newspapers, INCFO.
Stern, Daniel K., Ed., Newspaper Promotion Handbook.
Thayer, Frank, Newspaper Management--dated, but helpful.
*Udell, Jon, Economics of the American Newspaper--sponsored by ANPA foundation.
Udell, Jon, Economic Trends in the Daily Newspaper Business, 1946 to 1970.
Woods, Allan, Modern Newspaper Production--a history, now.

* in preparation.

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Appendix B

HELPFUL PERIODICALS

APME News, published monthly by the Associated Press Managing Editors association.
The Bulletin of the American Society of Newspaper Editors.
Bulletin of the Inland Daily Press association.
Business Week, contains occasional news of newspaper publishing and its economic context.
Columbia Journalism Review, containing many articles concerning newspaper management.
The Copley Press, published by Copley newspapers.
Editor & Publisher, "the magazine of the Fourth estate," published weekly.
Fortune, a good source on the economic context of newspaper publishing.
Gannetteer, a Gannett newspaper monthly.
Graphic Arts Monthly
The Guild Reporter, the newspaper of the American Newspaper Guild.
Inland Printer & American Lithographer
Inplant Printer
ITU Review, the magazine of the International Typographical Union.
Journalism Quarterly, reporting research relevant to newspaper management.
Knowledge Industry Report, items concerning newspaper technology and law.
Media Industry Newsletter--Business Magazines, Inc.
New Equipment Digest--general plant maintenance, etc.
News Bulletin of the Audit Bureau of Circulations.
Newsletters of the International Newspaper Promotions association--research advertising, public relations, etc.
The Newspaper Controller--published monthly by the Institute of Newspaper Controllers and Finance Officers.
Newspaper Information Service newsletter, by American Newspaper Publishers assn.
Newspaper Management--Booth Newspapers, Inc.
Newspaper Production
Newsprint Facts, monthly
Printing Impressions--monthly
Printing Magazine
Publisher's Auxiliary, a national newspaper journal, published twice each month.
R.I. Bulletin--by ANPA's research institute at Easton, Pa.
Scripps-Howard News, monthly.
Wall Street Journal, publishes frequent articles concerning newspapers earnings, mergers, etc.

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Appendix C

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN NEWSPAPER MANAGEMENT

American Newspaper Publishers Association

American Society of Newspaper Editors

Associated Press Managing Editors Association

International Circulation Managers Association

International Newspaper Advertising Executives

International Newspaper Promotion Association

Institute of Newspaper Controllers and Finance Officers

National Newspaper Association

National Newspaper Publishers Association

Newspaper Personnel Relations Association

Newspaper Research Council

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Appendix D

SUGGESTED AREAS OF DISCUSSION FOR RESOURCES PERSONS

IN PRESENTATIONS TO SEMINAR

1. Organization of staff, department, or function, and ways in which it relates to general administration of management.

2. Number of employees engaged in department's activity. Nature of duties and activities.

3. Relationship to other departments of newspaper organization, and ways in which inter-departmental activities are coordinated.

4. Major expenses or costs of department's operation, in addition to personnel.

5. Impact of inflation and recession on department's operation. (What functions have been hit hardest? On the other hand, which have been able to absorb impact, because of improved technology, etc.?)

6. Improvements that have been made, recently, in department's operation. What additional changes are being considered?

7. What statistics or indices do you use, most, in determining department's efficiency, effectiveness, etc.?

8. Sources of most helpful ideas for improving department's operation?

9. What are the most up-to-date and reliable sources of information concerning new developments in your area of newspaper management?

10. What changes in your area do you foresee coming about in the next few years?

# # #

Appendix E

INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESEARCH PROJECT

ON SPECIAL PROBLEM

Designed to offer an unusual opportunity to acquire some coveted knowledge through extensive research in an area of daily newspaper management of special interest, this feature of the course also provides a chance to develop additional skill in expository writing.

Select an area of daily newspaper management of special interest to you, or a specific problem that interests you especially, and begin looking for perspective on it that goes beyond your textbook.

At the end of your textbook, you will find bibliographic references to other sources of information that can be examined for additional information and insight into the problem in which you have developed a special interest. Read the relevant sections of your textbook carefully, and then research the sources of further information listed at the end of the text.

Next, examine the general bibliography you have been provided, as a supplement to the syllabus of this course, for books containing information related to the area of newspaper management or problem that you've selected for further research.

Next, examine the list of helpful periodicals that you have been provided, to determine which of those should be most helpful. Then check to see whether the periodicals in which you have a special interest are indexed. If so, check those indexes. If not, go to the periodicals themselves immediately.

After doing you preliminary research, write a proposal for your project. Give special attention to the following:

1. An explanation of the specific area of daily newspaper management in which you propose to do your research.

2. The sources that you expect to use, and what use you expect to make of each.

3. The kind of special information on your problem that appears to be readily available, in the sources at hand in libraries, etc.

4. The people involved in newspaper management to whom you expect to talk, or with whom you are corresponding.

5. How you expect the information and knowledge that you are seeking to be of practical use to you in your career.

# # #

Appendix F

REPRESENTATIVE QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION SESSIONS, QUIZZES AND EXAMINATIONS

Between World War II and 1970, the period covered by Jon Udell's study of "Economic Trends in the Daily Newspaper Business," what were the major changes?

In the preface of their book, Newspaper Organization and Management, Frank Rucker and Herbert Williams discuss six improvements taking place in the publication of newspapers that they see as having special significance, and to which they devote most of the book. What are these improvements?

Explain the advantages of group ownership of newspapers.

Give examples of what is known as "vertical" ownership in newspaper publishing.

Explain the three basic types of organization, discussed by your instructor, applying each of them to a newspaper organization.

Explain the trend in the number of daily newspapers in this country, in the past 10 years.

On the basis of Jon Udell's study, the current recession should contribute to further increases in newspaper circulation in what ways? On the other hand, what are the factors that should prove countervailing influences on newspaper circulation?

Which countries produce most of the world's newsprint? Which consume most of it? Which countries are the biggest "debtors," in newsprint consumption, and which "creditors?"

What are the three functions of a newspaper publisher, as discussed by _____, editor and publisher of the _____?

The organization of newspaper management were discussed by _____, publisher of the _____, in terms of five departments. What were those departments?

Explain the difference between the functions of a department of general administration and that of the business department, in a typical newspaper organization having both.

The publisher of the _____ said that his newspaper had experienced a sharp decline in what kind of advertising, as a result of the recent recession?

Explain the difference between an assistant to a newspaper's publisher and an assistant publisher.

In what diverse ways are computers being used in the management of newspaper publishing today?

Explain the purpose of the Newspaper Preservation Act, being as specific as you can in describing its function.

List as many of the departments frequently found in newspaper organization as you can, explaining each briefly.

Explain a hot metal type offset press production system.

What kinds of taxes are newspapers required to pay? Be as specific as possible, in listing them.

Are newspaper carriers employees of the paper or independent businessmen? Elaborate.

Explain the conventional role of commercial printing in a newspaper publishing business.

Relate the functions of enterprise management, generally, to the management of a newspaper.

In the questionnaire survey among members of the National Press Photographers Association, what was found to be the most common practice concerning ownership of photographic equipment used by newspaper photographers?

Explain the variety of functions for which computers are used by newspapers.

In selecting a site for the construction of a new newspaper plant, what are the most important considerations?

In planning the interior of a newspaper plant, what are the most important considerations?

Rucker and Williams make several suggestions for maintaining and increasing a newspaper's advertising business. List as many as possible.

What's the difference between a VDT and an OCR?

From the enclosed explanation of the financial problems of the _____ newspapers, where does it appear to you that the management of the newspapers first started to "go wrong?"

In their annual report, the _____ Newspapers recited a number of achievements in areas such as production, advertising, circulation, news, etc. Explain as many as possible.

Describe the _____ group, as well as you can, in terms of concentration of ownership, number of newspapers, their distribution, size, etc.

Explain the function of the "Creative services" division of the advertising department of the _____ Newspapers.

The authors of your textbook give several arguments that can be used by a newspaper advertising staff to meet radio and television competition. Explain as many as you can recall.

Explain the position of the authors of your textbook on the issue of whether or not a newspaper publisher and other representatives of its management should participate in civic affairs, join community organizations, etc.

Was the ABC established, and is it operated, for the benefit of advertisers or newspaper advertising departments? Explain.

Do you think that the _____'s reaction to bad times of cutting employees salaries by 10 per cent was wise. If not, what do you think might have been better?

The _____ has been operating the most extensive research operation of any newspaper organization in this country. Do you think the money was wisely spent?

How does the Audit Bureau of Circulations go about its function, as explained in "Dateline Today?"

Explain "The Total Newspaper Concept," as developed by Paul Hirt.

What are the full names and functions of the newspaper management-related organizations represented by ANPA, ASNE, INPA, APME, ICMA, INAE, NNA, INCFO and NFRA?

What kinds of services do most state press associations provide member newspapers and their publishers?

What are the most common types of research done by newspaper research departments?

Make the most meaningful distinction possible between newspaper promotion, public relations, community relations and public service.

Explain the results of the survey among newspaper publishers, conducted a few years ago by Jack Haskins at Syracuse University, concerning their attitudes on newspaper research.

What are the criteria of a good newspaper, according to the Associated Press Managing Editors?

Explain the essential difference between these three basic process processes of printing newspapers: (1) letter press, (2) off-set lithography, and (3) gravure, rotogravure or intaglio.

List as many as possible of the many ways in which a newspaper's circulation department can operate more efficiently.

Do you think the subscription-paying public will usually "be reasonable" in its reaction when management tries to explain reasons for making cost reductions that decrease quality? Explain.

What do you see as the biggest problems in the _____'s operation?

From the content of the film shown last session, which department of the newspaper does it seem to you would profit most, most logically, in increased public understanding and appreciation? Explain the reasons that you think so.

As assistant managing editor of the nation's best medium size daily newspaper, in charge of training and education, you're assigned to design an orientation program aimed at familiarizing news-editorial personnel with the problems of management. What things would you emphasize, and why?

# # #

Appendix G

REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSES TO HOUR EXAMINATION IN NEWSPAPER MANAGEMENT COURSE

To give the student a feel for his or her grasp on the overall challenge of newspaper management, and knowledge related to it, the following question can be posed:

> Let's assume that as the country's leading authority, in the field of newspaper management, you've been asked to conduct a special institute for promising newspaper staffers being trained to become publishers, in the future. What information concerning trends in newspaper publishing and management, and particular facts important in understanding newspaper management and its problems, would you include in your instruction as items of top priority? Be as specific as possible, please.

Such a question produces responses like these two:

Response I

(Notes from Introductory remarks)

Future Newspaper Publishers Seminar

Advent, Euphoria

Someday, 1976

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.

First, I'd like to thank the Universal Press Institute for arranging this kind of seminar.

Two weeks is hardly enough time for a promising young staffer to be made into a publisher, so instead of flooding you with facts, let me try to summarize what you should know attitudinally.

The difference between a great reporter and a great publisher is not so great as you may think. Both are goal-oriented and both are trying to implement those goals in the best ways possible.

A reporter's goal is basically short range: what's the best way to handle and present the news for tomorrow's edition. A publisher's goals, on the other hand, are long-range: what's the best way to develop a newspaper over 10 or 15--or even 25--years.

The publisher's basic objective is to maximize profits, to protect and promote the existence and financial health of the newspaper. If the news product is bad, if the advertisers don't find the newspaper to be an adequate medium for their important messages, if the newspaper doesn't sell or isn't delivered promptly, the newspaper can't continue. That's the major point I'd like to make: stay alive. To do this, profits are essential.

Along those lines, let's go into some background regarding newspapers and management. The number one problem concerning editors is declining readership. Between 1974 and 1975, according to Jon Udell, the United States lost 8 newspapers. The picture is not as depressing as it may appear, however. The good papers, the well-managed, responsible, and responsive publications, are thriving. For example, the Gannett Company's most recent financial report paints a picture of success. Gannett, with its 50-odd newspapers in about 15 states, are read by more than 2 million subscribers. The papers are good, consistently winning prizes, but more importantly are well-managed, with an eye to the long-range future. Note their space-age technology, with the development of laser platemaking.

In management science, two developments are applicable to newspaper organization: management-by-objectives, and the total integration factor.

Management by objectives is goal-oriented. Basic functions of management include planning, policy-making, and decision-making. If you plan for the future, your policies and decisions will reflect a broader vision. Therein lies success.

Secondly, by totally integrating the segments of a newspaper, the organization acts as one rather than several departments pulling against one another, having been cast in the traditional--and faulty--adversary concept. I'll say more about this when I discuss Paul Hirt's "Total Newspaper Concept."

Before I get into a breakdown of appropriate goals by departments, let me just mention basic newspaper ownership alternatives. The worst type, perhaps, is the individual ownership. Besides having a narrowing influence on vision, it is financially inferior in terms of taxation (especially inheritance taxes). Partnership is appropriate for small operations wishing to remain small. I'd like to urge you to keep in mind the advantages of group ownership coupled with vertical ownership, which I feel is the best organization.

Group ownership offers the advantages of a central office to facilitate administrative tasks, the purchase of supplies in quantity at discount prices, and a sharing of ideas and problem-solving. The influence of a vertical ownership adds a most important plus. If the group-owned company also owns the trucks for delivery, the paper mills, ink-making plant and other newspaper-oriented interests, more control can be exercised by the newspaper organization.

A case in point is our dwindling newsprint supply. Assurance that newsprint is available, through a company's own paper mills, can save both time and money and assure continuity of publication.

Other forms of ownership that we'll discuss include employee ownership, represented by newspapers like the Kansas City Star and Milwaukee Journal, and joint operations.

Now, let's discuss, briefly, some of the problems facing individual departments. Seminars for specific departments will be conducted throughout the following weeks, but this will be an overview.

Goals of the news-editorial department are to produce a product that readers cannot do without, and present responsive and responsible articles. That presents the problem of how much do you publish what readers should know, compared with that they want to know. There's a balance to be struck here, depending on the local community.

Methods of research (content analysis, readership studies, etc.) are vital to view the whole picture. Since you are presenting a newspaper of record, all the news--good and bad--must find its way into the news columns. On the other hand, personal notes, local personality features, and people-oriented news must also be presented to improve the confidence and comradeship readers find in your publication.

In other seminars, we'll discuss labor contract negotiations and other personnel problems, including employee motivation.

The basic long-range goal of the circulation department is not necessarily selling more papers, but preserving quality of delivery service and local circulation intensity. A circulation manager's duties are to sell the paper, deliver it and collect for it. What are the best methods? We'll discuss things like promotion for subscription sales, and carrier boy motivation, later this week. The major point I'd like to make, here and now, is that circulation managers must constantly look for ways to improve the execution of their tasks.

That can mean a reassessment of the carrier boy tradition. Perhaps mail delivery would work better in your area. You may want to preserve newsprint by discouraging fringe subscribers, concentrating on a more intensive blanketing. Finally, how does a circulation manager cope with the shopper, pennysaver or throwaway? It's a real problem to have your advertising base threatened by what you may consider a non-newspaper.

In the advertising department, the goal is to sell ads, obviously, but how can you continue to serve your advertisers and build goodwill so they will continue to advertise in papers 10 or 15 years from now? Sell a service. Sell a response. Don't sell space alone. The service to be sold is excellent ad preparation, with an eye to fulfilling the needs of the individual advertiser. The response you sell can be outlined in research studies showing exactly who your subscribers are and what products they want, need and buy. In this way, you can better maximize profits by developing a continuity of advertising and a fine reputation for excellent service.

The three departments about which I've been talking--news, circulation and advertising--comprise the core circle of the "total newspaper concept." They all three must pull together, because each feeds the other two.

An excellent news product sells papers. High circulation figures sell advertising. Good advertising attracts more readers. They're all aspects of a healthy organization.

Rather than the traditional pyramid form of organization, with the publisher at the pinnacle, visualize a circle. Paul Hirt has loaned me some slides to better illustrate the "Total Newspaper Concept."

Let's look, now, at Hirt's concept, which puts the publisher in the center of a circular form of organization in which news-editorial, circulation, and advertising functions support one another and are coordinated by the publisher.

The publisher's position in the center of Hirt's circule gives him effective and efficient control over the entire newspaper operation, but the major departments work together in cooperation with one another.

Encircling the news-circulation-advertising circle is another function that provides vital service to those departments.

Mechanical is, by far, the most obviously vital associated department.

Let mechanical developments work for you, within your goals. If finances do not allow you an offset press to replace your old but useful letterpress, developments such as plastic platemaking can combine photo composition and letterpress efficiently. If time is of the essence, a computerized newsroom can lop off significant minutes and hours with scanners and video display terminals. Computerization is worth its cost in terms of putting out a good product with the greatest speed. If the mechanical department is not your "thing"--and I recognize many editors, circulation managers and advertising executives in the audience this evening--do not be computer-shy. Associations like the American Society of Newspaper Editors and the American Newspaper Publishers Association put out excellent technological wrapups. Their conventions are invaluable.

Other associated department--promotion, research, business and administration--are subordinately vital to a well-oiled newspaper operation and we'll get into depth regarding their functions and problems in later sessions.

In conclusion, let me stress that newspaper management is unique only in the sense that newspapers hold a unique position in this nation. Their role is vital to the health of democracy and that should be accepted by any publisher who considers himself to be responsible. But good management principles are universal, and excellent management is a common-sense, people-oriented approach.

We're in an important business as newsmen. Our most important goal should be to survive, to maintain the free market of ideas. Good newspaper management is the first step we take. Thank you for your attention.

-- Mary Durkin

Response II

Curriculum

Institute for "Future Newspaper Publishers"

Luann Zanzola, Director

The institute is comprised of day-long seminars on topics of special concern and importance to future publishers. The seminars:

"The Total Newspaper"--a seminar that begins with Paul Hirt's lecture on the title subject. The importance of interdepartmental cooperation will be stressed. Alternatives to the traditional triangular model of management will be introduced. This seminar is especially recommended to news-ed types, who seem to approach publishing and the business end of journalism with some hostility.

"The Importance of Being Solvent"--designed to stress to news-ed types the importance and operation of the business aspects of newspapers. The theme is the newspaper that is financially well-run is the newspaper that can best serve the public. Speakers include business managers and editors of papers that are solvent and thriving, and business managers and editors from papers confronted by financial problems. Hopefully, participants will come to realize that newspapers are businesses, and as such, must be operated at a profit.

"Good News/Bad News: Financial Trends in the Newspaper Business"--built around Jon Udell's monograph and pamphlet on the business history of newspapers. In addition to Udell's data, a special research project of recent newspaper business trends is to be discussed (the project takes an honest look at circulation versus population growth and makes projections about the business future of newspapers, taking account of the TV and radio competition). Other factors to be examined include (1) trends in family living, (2) the buying power of single person families; (3) the rush back to the cities from the suburbs, (4) education: can consumers read newspapers; (5) general business trends; (6) the importance of having financial expertise built into your newspaper staff.

"Redefining the News"--designed to bring news-ed types back to territory in which they feel comfortable. In light of the business trends discussed in the last two seminars, and in light of the increasingly complex laws and negotiations which affect Americans, newspapers must strive for the reporting of more relevant news. Crime stories, cheesecake pix, and gee-whiz news can be thrown out; they should be replaced by thoughtful, interpretive pieces on business, legal, legislative and consumer trends. All news must be related to the reader. The trend is toward consumer-oriented news.

"The New Technology"--designed to show what happens to news copy nowadays when it leaves the hands of news-ed types. Special emphasis on how to edit by computer. Also to be discussed are: use of VDTs in the ad department,

the transformation of the composing room, offset printing, photo-typesetting, pagination, and costs and problems of computerizing.

"The Circulation Department of the Future"--latest trends in newspaper circulation. Almost a how-to course, with practical suggestions to circulation problems in specific communities (those of the future publishers). To be discussed are automating the circulation department, bringing computers to the mailroom, recruiting and keeping efficient carriers, campaigns to increase circulation, and efficient organization of a circulation department.

"Production and Printing, or How To Make Friends With Computers"--increased use of computerized technology in the composing, engraving and press rooms of newspapers. Included in this seminar will be a trip to the _____ newspaper publishing plant for a look at the latest in production facilities. The ethics of replacing people with machines (and the labor relations problems this creates) will also be discussed. Newsprint costs and supplies will also be discussed.

"Advertising: It's More Important Than You Think"--designed to show: (1) how ad revenues make up the bulk of newspapers' total income; (2) the legal and ethical dilemmas confronting advertising managers; (3) efficient organization of the ad department, with guest speakers _____ and _____ to discuss how they successfully reorganized the ad department of their newspapers; (4) Creative Services, a special department to offer customers artwork and ad copy (at a price, of course). A discussion of the ABC's operation will also be included.

"Research: Newspaper's Secret Weapon"--designed to show how vital research is to all aspects of the newspaper industry. The case for research will be built upon specific examples of where (and how) research has resulted in increased efficiency and profits. Problems that staffers have encountered on their papers will be reviewed with an eye for solving them through research. Well-known research projects such as Jack Haskins study "Newspaper Editors Views On Research" will be reviewed.

"Promotion: Oiling the Gears"--the internal and external functions of newspaper promotion departments. Internally, such departments should (1) provide employee incentives; (2) publicize the paper to its employees; (3) aim to create an atmosphere of goodwill and loyalty among employees. Externally, the promotion department must (1) create a good image of the paper in the community; (2) conduct research to determine how the paper's community appeal can be enhanced; (3) facilitate community/newspaper cooperation and idea exchange. The promotion manager especially must promote communication laterally and vertically within the newspaper company.

"Personnel: How To Improve What Makes Your Paper Tick"--trends in personnel management of newspaper. Special consideration will be given to: (1) labor relations, NLRB and the new technology; (2) employee benefits: special packages designed for specific needs; (3) women and minorities--special consideration must be given those two factions; includes a review of affirmative action and equal opportunity legislation; also

will include a review of specific benefit packages for each faction; (4) hiring practices, or how to determine who best fits your company's needs; (5) continuing professional development of those all ready employed; (6) creating goodwill toward the company among employees.

"Laws: What You Don't Know Can Hurt You"--review of labor relations laws, tax laws, the Newspaper Preservation Act, antitrust laws, libel laws, sunshine laws, advertising and obscenity laws, post office regulations, copyright laws, free press/fair trial rulings and developments, and other legal aspects of newspaper publishing.

"Case Studies: Jobs Well Done"--specific problems on specific newspapers and how these problems were solved. Includes (1) _____ revamping of the _____'s advertising department; (2) Paul Hirt's approach to the "Total Newspaper;" (3) The _____'s use of computers; (4) The _____'s use of new technology; (5) an interview with the personnel director of the _____Company; (6) an interview with _____ and _____, women who became newspaper publishers; (7) a discussion of the advantages of group ownership, including representatives of _____ and _____ as panelists; (8) a field trip to discuss about the design and operation of the _____'s newsroom.

"Professionalism: The Perfect Seasoning"--professional organizations and how they can improve newspapers. Representatives from such organizations as ANPA, INPA, SPJ, ICMA, NPRA, INCFO, ABC, various regional and state press associations, and various other newspaper organizations, will present brief explanations of their organizations.

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